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ABSTRACT

The final report evaluates the activities of the first nine weeks of a project designed to develop a curriculum guide for a school-model store at a North Dakota high school. The program combines the favorable aspects of both the school store and the model store, providing "live" experiences as well as simulated ones. The Distributive Education One curriculum is built into the store. The major retailing functions--merchandising, management, sales promotion, and finance are the foundations on which the store and the project are developed. Students are grouped into one of the retailing functions for nine weeks, rotating at the end of the period. The report presents the rationale for the program, a general description of its design, and suggested implications of the school store. (NJ)

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MODEL STORE CURRICULUM

A Developmental Model for North Dakota Schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FINAL REPORT

Model Store Curriculum
Project No.___

Todd Goschen
Dennis Warcup

Fargo Public Schools
Fargo, North Dakota

December, 1974

In Cooperation with

NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD
FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Bismarck, North Dakota

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ABSTRACT AND METHODS

This project is to provide a curriculum guide for a school store-model store at North High School, Fargo, North Dakota. The store at this high school is an attempt to combine the favorable aspects of both the school store and the model store. A school store provides actual "live" experiences to students while the model store simulates the experiences.

One important feature of the project is that the Distributive Education I curriculum is built into the store. The major retailing functions; merchandising, management, sales promotion, and finance; are the foundations upon which the store and the project are developed. Students are grouped into one of the retailing functions listed above for a nine week period. At the end of each nine week period the students rotate to one of the other retail functions. Projects relating to each function were researched and developed to provide actual and simulated retail experiences.

The store is open during school hours and is staffed with students enrolled in the Distributive Education I class. All class members are required to work during free periods throughout the week.

This report is an evaluation of the school store-model store at the end of the first nine week period.

CHAPTER I

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Results and Findings

Distributive Education has as one of its goals the preparation of students for jobs in marketing and distribution. The training necessary to meet this goal should be as nearly like the actual experience as possible. Many educators believe that cooperative part-time education provides this training. Questions can be raised regarding the success many programs are achieving in meeting that goal. Are students receiving practical hands-on assignments or tasks? Are they making real sales presentations? Are students actually engaged in preparing real advertisements? Are they becoming involved in actual management decision making?

In most instances, taking into account the quality of the cooperative training station, students are not given the opportunity to partake of management's role in business. Relatively few training stations permit DE cooperative education students to become involved in the actual decision making process. This attitude by businesses is to be expected since most of the students have not had exposure to many of management's problems.

Where and when should DE students receive this exposure to make their cooperative education more meaningful? One answer is to start a school store. The school store can provide most of the hands-on practical experiences a student needs before becoming involved in

cooperative education. The school store can become a training device offering experiences and opportunities in public relations, management, control personnel, recruiting, leadership, sales and advertising, window display, and buying.[1] The most beneficial time a distributive education student can receive this training is prior to the senior year cooperative program.

Need for the Study and Purpose

There are a number of articles in periodicals which provide checklists or give general suggestions in developing school stores. Many of the materials outline particular areas to cover, but few actually set down a complete method of operating a school store. The purpose of the study is to develop a complete course of study for the school store at North High School in Fargo, North Dakota.

Implementing the school store into the DE curriculum results in the following realignment of the course offerings. Students in grade ten may select a one semester course in Salesmanship. Classes in grade eleven have been replaced by the school store. The cooperative program is maintained and is available to students in grade twelve. Selective cooperative placement of students in grade eleven is also maintained.

A limited amount of printed materials are available regarding the operation of a school store. There are also few model stores operating in the United States with Minnesota being a pioneer in the area. Little published material is from these stores. The

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[1]Joseph C. Hecht, "Round Out DE Education With a School Store", DE Today, Winter 1967, p. 3.

project at Fargo North High School is unique in that a school store serves as the class as well as an operating business. It is a combination school store and model store. By definition a model store provides simulated experiences, while a school store provides actual experiences. The Oklahoma DE Course of Study, the University of Texas DE Materials, and the Ohio State University DE Materials were used extensively in developing and assembling the curriculum for this project.

As stated earlier, the school store serves as the DE I classroom as well as an operating business. The curriculum for the store is planned around the four major retail functions: Management, merchandising, sales promotion and finance. Virtually every activity involved in owning and operating a business can be taught by the use of the school store. The curriculum materials are developed to formulate retailing experiences which will aid the student in skills and attitudes necessary for later cooperative work experience.

The school store at North High School is located in the commons portion of the school building. This area is located in the center of the school and generates a great amount of student traffic. All classrooms as well as the large group instruction room and the theater empty into the commons area. The commons also serves as the lunch area during the noontime hours. This location is ideal since it serves as the hub of the school.

An area 28 feet by 28 feet within the commons is used as space for the school store. The store is designed with walls constructed floor to ceiling with double glass entrance doors and a display window area twelve feet in length. The display window space can easily be

divided into three individual four foot windows by using movable partitions to separate them. The interior fixtures include: A cash register, glass showcases, a wrap counter, wall merchandising units, gondolas, mannequinns, paperback book displayers, and sales tables. The fixtures are not permanently attached so that the store layout can be changed as the need arises. Figure one on the following page illustrates the store layout.

The four major retail functions comprised the elements for preparing curriculum materials. Each of the functions - management, merchandising, sales promotion and finance - require nine weeks to complete. The students are divided into four groups according to the above functions and change each quarter.

Each group is scheduled once a week with the instructor and all students meet as a class once a week. The remaining three periods per week the students are scheduled to work in the store during their free periods. Store hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 2:05 p.m. Using this approach permits the student to become actively involved in all of the retail operations.

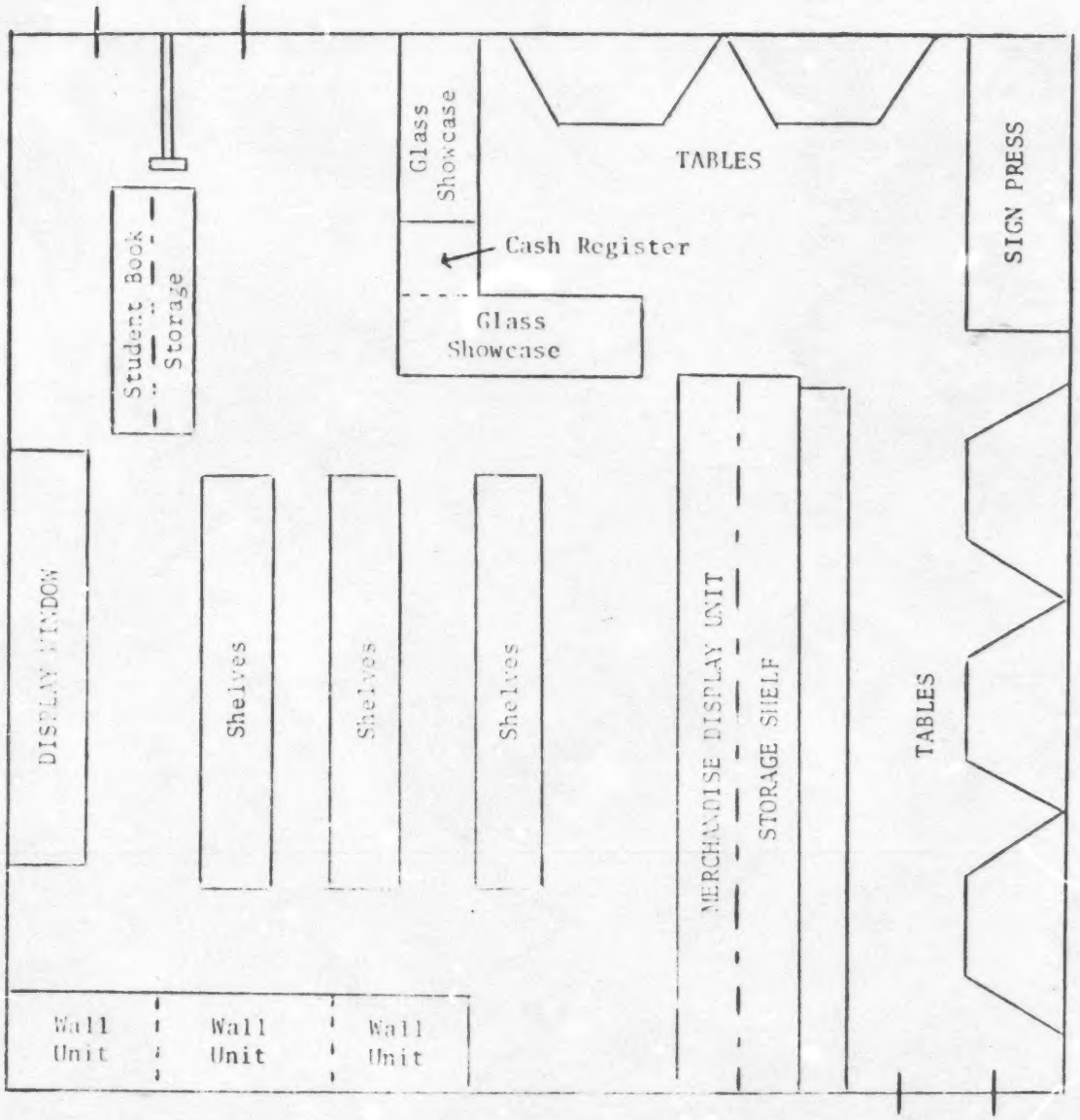
Management Team

The management team includes a General Manager, Assistant General Manager and four department managers. The general manager for each nine week period is selected through the following procedure. All of the students in the management team are eligible to become the general manager. Every management team member prepares an application blank, a resume' and arranges for a personal interview with a committee composed of advisory committee members. The advisory committee selects

School Store Layout

North High School

Figure 1



the best student as general manager, the second best as assistant general manager and the remaining members become department managers within the store. This procedure requires the student to learn about application blanks, personal resumes' and interviewing techniques. It also actively involves the DE advisory committee members. The same procedure for selections is used for each nine week period utilizing different advisory committee members. Once the general manager and assistant have been selected, they assume the responsibility of the overall operation of the school store.

An additional breakdown of the store into departments of school supplies, school and paperback books, specialities, and consignment sales permits the use of department managers. The school supplies department includes items such as: Pens, pencils, paper, folders, rulers, compasses, protractors, erasers, and other similar school materials used by the students. Class workbooks are sold by the school store as a student convenience even though they are usually salable only at the beginning of the school year. The supply of paperback books can usually be arranged on a consignment basis through a local supplier. This arrangement will eliminate the capital requirements necessary to maintain the wide selection necessary in this department. The specialities department includes items of merchandise such as: School imprinted T-shirts, sweat shirts, pennants, pins, novelties, and other booster items. The consignment sales department receives merchandise from local merchants on a consignment basis. To illustrate, the management team and the merchandise team may select women's sportswear as merchandise that should be carried by the store. This information is relayed to the DE instructor

who contacts a local business requesting approval to obtain the merchandise. Once the approval has been given, the management and merchandise teams must prepare a list of items they feel meets the needs of the store customers. A group of buyers from these two teams visit the local merchant and discuss their list with the merchant. The local business is usually willing and able to guide the students in selecting appropriate items of merchandise.

Each department manager is responsible for the activities of their department and have control over the department. The general manager and his assistant aid the department managers in decision making.

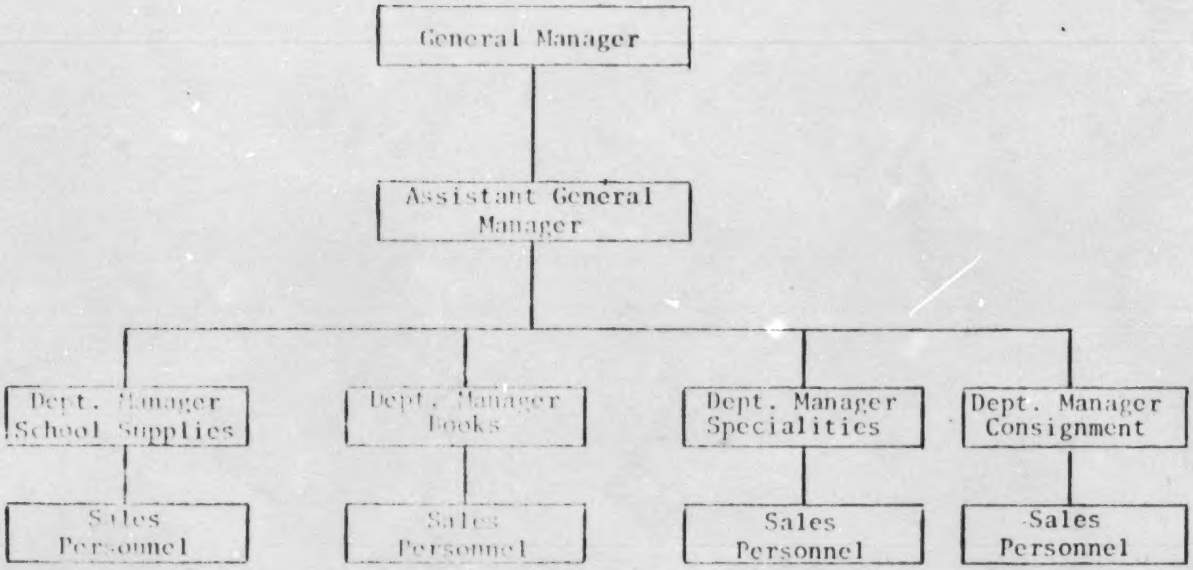
The entire management team is responsible for preparing an organizational chart of the school store. (See Figure 2) The team also develops personnel policies which must include: Simulated hourly wages, fringe benefits, employee conduct and grooming, training, evaluation, and employee communications. The management team also must prepare a personnel handbook which includes the store's rules and regulations. The supervision of the other functions of sales promotion, merchandising, and finance is an additional management responsibility. The team is responsible for all marketing research and public relations activities for the store.

The Merchandising Team

The merchandising unit, like all the other units, is nine weeks in length and follows the rotation schedule. Team members are provided similar checksheets as the other teams and have other specific responsibilities which apply to their area. The responsibilities of

Figure 2

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STORE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



this team include receiving, checking, stocking, marking and pricing all of the incoming merchandise. This is by no means a small task since they are charged with the responsibility of maintaining adequate stocks and providing a means of control of all merchandise. Individual assignments in the merchandising units cover all of the necessary information needed to carry out the operation of the store. Buying of merchandise is one of the responsibilities of this team. All members of the team must work together with each of the department managers in determining what stock to order and in what quantities. Determining the placement of merchandise within the store is a duty of the team. Merchandising decisions must be made to solve the problem of slow moving items, for example: Should the placement of the merchandise be changed? Would additional promotion help to increase sales?

The Sales Promotion Team

The sales promotion materials provide several individual assignments in preparing advertisements and window displays. Group assignments include: Preparing bi-weekly advertisements for the school newspaper, preparation of radio commercials to be given over the school intercom system, and preparing television commercials utilizing the video tape equipment in the school. During each nine week period of the school year, the sales promotion team must plan an all-store promotion in keeping with standard promotions used by "real" stores. For example, the first nine week team can use a "back-to-school" theme or Homecoming festivities of the school. Each of the nine week periods has at least one event that can be

used, such as: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, and others. Special store assignments are also included in the unit for each of the store's departments. These assignments must be completed in cooperation with the department manager.

The Finance Team

Many of the assignments in the finance unit are simulated. Team members must consult with management to determine the hourly wages to be used in the simulated payroll. Every student who works in the store is required to keep a time card indicating the hours worked per day and week. Finance team members prepare a weekly payroll which must include weekly gross earning, social security and withholding tax deductions, preparing individual employee payroll records, payroll deduction forms, and payroll checks.

Another simulated project is the Recordkeeping Practice Set I, 1966 Edition, by Noble Fritz. This McGraw-Hill publication includes a complete set of accounting transactions for a small business for a one month period. The transaction booklet in the practice set illustrates all of the transactions and all of the business papers and forms necessary for the completion of the practice set. A minimum amount of accounting knowledge is needed to complete the practice set since all of the transactions are explained fully. Each member of the finance team is required to purchase and complete the practice set during their nine week period.

A balance sheet and income statement must be prepared each month for the school store. Preparation of these statements requires the finance team to keep an accurate inventory of all of the merchan-

dise in the school store. At the close of each month all invoices and bills must be paid. The procedure for payment requires the team members to prepare a check request form and present the form to the school district accounting office. All of the actual accounting and money is kept by the Fargo School District Office accounting department. This eliminated the need for a state tax and use permit.

CHAPTER II

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SCHOOL STORE

The school store has all of the ingredients for perfecting a DE program.[1] The store becomes a training device which offers the student experiences in public relations, management, control, personnel, recruiting, leadership, sales and advertising, window display, and buying. What makes the school store experiences so valuable is its ability to focus attention on problems in actual retailing operations.[2] A great many of the assignments the students complete are situations they may be facing on-the-job. It must be remembered that the North High store is designed for students in their junior year of high school. The placement of the store "classroom" is to provide the student with meaningful experiences before enrolling in the senior year cooperative program. This arrangement prepares the student to become a more valuable employee when participating in the cooperative program. Students working in the school store are given an opportunity to make decisions and to see the results of the action taken.[3] Exposure to realistic problems facing retailing gives the student a better understanding of the entire role of a retail store. Some of the decisions the students make are not

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[1] Joseph C. Hecht, "Round Out DE Education With a School Store", DE Today, Winter 1967, p. 3.

[2] Lawrence Levinson, "The School Store: Learning by Involvement, Part 2", DE Today, Summer 1974, p. 8.

[3] Ibid.

going to be profitable. This experience can provide a real learning experience since not all decisions of retailers turn out to be the best decisions.

A second implication of the school store is the promotional aspect it can provide for the DE program. Since there are a limited number of "showplaces" in a school, the school store becomes a natural focal point for visitors who want to see up-to-date educational ideas.[1] The "showplace" theme also applies to other students not enrolled in DE. The students soon realize that the DE program differs from their regular classes in that the school store is part of the total course.[2] The development of an exprit de corps in students working in the store is a valuable aid in the success of the store.

A third implication applies to future recruitment for the DE program. Interest in the store and the enthusiasm of the students enrolled in the school store can stimulate interest in DE.[3] Students enrolled in the Salesmanship class, offered to students in grade ten, can be recruited to work in the store. Exposure to the retailing experience is a motivating force for taking DE in their junior and senior years. The school store can awaken interest in and curiosity about retailing and provide unequaled learning opportunities for students.[4]

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[1]Hecht, "Round Out DE Education With a School Store", p. 3.

[2]DECA Guide, "Administration of the School Store", Falls Church, Virginia, 1973-1974, p. 41.

[3]Hecht, "Round Out DE Education With a School Store", p. 4.

[4]Levinson, "The School Store: Learning by Involvement - Part 2", p. 8.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Prepare students for gainful employment in distributive occupations. This is one of the chief goals for distributive educators. Preparation for gainful employment means that the DE educator must review the instructional methods employed to attain that goal. Are the traditional preparatory classes fulfilling that goal? How meaningful are the learning experiences received in these classes? Are the students learning by involvement? Are projects "real"? The use of a school store can become a viable alternative to the traditional classroom and in some cases cooperative education.[1] School store experiences provide "real" situations for the student. Daily assignments employed in the store-class setting become more meaningful when the student actually sees the results of his work. These results are measurable and are usually in the form of increased sales for the store. The traditional classroom project of store layout, for example, is one in which the student may construct a drawing, while the school store requires that the student actually move showcases. Students can see how store layout can affect sales volume.

The format employed of dividing the store into the four retailing functions, gives the student sufficient variety in the store functions

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[1]Lawrence Levinson, "The School Store: Learning by Involvement", DE Today, Spring 1974, p. 1.

and duties. Each unit is nine weeks long, which allows sufficient time for most students and may push others into completing their assignments. Several of the assignments in each function require the combined efforts of all students in the team. When combining all team members, students soon realize that there must be cooperation in a store in order to complete the job. Other projects in the store require the efforts of two or more teams to meet the goal. Here, team members can witness the need for interdepartmental cooperation. Using a school store can provide the spark needed to get students involved. If one member does not do his job, others must pick up the slack. But, like a real business, the student not doing his job will soon feel team pressure from the other member.

The school store is not for all DE instructors. Anyone who prefers the structured classroom will find the store to be very frustrating. In many cases a few students will be completing the same project, unless it is a team project. Students assigned individual work will be at many different stages of completion. Some students will need constant prodding, while others will complete all assigned work early. Actually, this is the real significance of this project, individualized instruction but with deadlines to meet for the school store.

The placement of the school store in the junior year provides for early identification of those students interested in a career in distribution. Students find out in school, rather than on-the-job, whether they are geared for a career in retailing or job in distribution. The school store may not be the answer for all DE programs,

but it can provide unlimited experiences for students when they learn by involvement.

Conclusions

The testing period for the store concept was nine weeks in length. In general, the total approach has been very favorable by students, administration, faculty, advisory committee and the general public. During a recent parent back-to-school night many favorable comments were received from the parents visiting the school.

The following is a brief look at each function with changes that are now being implemented and problems that still have to be resolved:

Management -

We decided to elect the manager by a vote of his group members rather than use the interview method used in the first quarter. The assistant manager was also elected as were team captains from each of the other functions to be a part of management. The remaining four members of the management group were elected to be officers in DECA; president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter. Management now meets Fridays to plan for the next week and meets with the team captains Mondays to give them instructions for their group. On the first Monday of each month the class will meet as a whole for a DECA meeting. These two changes are an attempt to improve communications.

During the first quarter, the coordinator was required to take a more active role than originally planned due to the inability of the student manager. Lack of communications from management to the other groups was a problem. The department manager positions tended to

become meaningless.

Sales Promotion -

This group was the most enjoyable and successful for all of the students during the testing period. An all school contest was held to name the store. A ten dollar prize was offered for the name selected. "The Common's Market" was the winning entry.

A problem that is peculiar to this group is that there are so many tasks to complete, that it is difficult to complete all of them in nine weeks. One solution that is being considered is to assign two members to each task for a two week period and then rotate assignments.

Merchandising -

One of the areas that need improvement in this group as well as the others is the attitude of each member to "see" beyond the need of completing the assigned tasks. To see the everyday chores of housekeeping; i.e. pick up paper, clean glass, arrange merchandise.

A solution to the communication problem, mentioned earlier, and the assignment problem above is for the team captain to post a list of things to be done on a daily or weekly basis. When the student works in the store, if he is not busy with customers, he checks the assignment list for things to do.

Finance -

In this group there is a definite time lag between the duties and the assignments. Most of the duties must be completed at the end of the month; i.e. simulated payroll, financial statements, inventory. Attendance in the store is by way of an assigned time sheet on which the

students sign their initials. The finance team keeps attendance weekly and calculates the payroll monthly or quarterly. There seems to be some misunderstanding of the function of the finance unit. At the end of the first quarter nobody selected this as their first choice for their next unit.

We are stressing more training with the cash register in this unit to give the students something to do during each month as well as to improve our use of the register. The practice set that is required in this unit proved to be an excellent assignment. This unit does help the student to become aware of the financing problems in business.

Recommendations

Evaluation of this program must be a continuous process. Students are beginning to recognize that procedures, policies, merchandise, and store operations require constant evaluation and change. There is a dangerous tendency toward a monetary evaluation rather than an objective evaluation on the basis of the learning process.

We have found the store approach to be a very realistic method of teaching distributive education skills and would recommend a similar operation to every distributive education program in the state. However, due to the many diverse functions involved in the operation and teaching of this method, an extended contract seems necessary to prepare and oversee this operation is much great than anticipated.

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